

1 Introduced by Senate Committee on Government Operations  
2 Referred to Committee on  
3 Date:  
4 Subject: Public safety communications; E-911 Board; dispatch services  
5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to expand the  
6 jurisdiction of the Enhanced 911 Board to include development,  
7 implementation, and supervision of regional public safety dispatch services.

8 An act relating to the modernization of public safety communications in  
9 Vermont

10 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

11 Sec. 1. TITLE

12 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Vermont Public Safety  
13 Communications Modernization Act of 2023.

14 Sec. 2. FINDINGS AND INTENT

15 (a) The General Assembly finds:

16 (1) Protecting public safety and welfare is an essential function of State  
17 government.

18 (2) A comprehensive and effective public safety communications  
19 system comprises both an emergency calling system and a public safety  
20 dispatch system.

1           (3) Since 1994, the Enhanced 911 Board has successfully overseen the  
2           development and implementation of a nationally recognized, statewide  
3           Enhanced 911 system.

4           (4) Over the past few decades, the State has not developed or equitably  
5           financed a regional public safety dispatch system.

6           (5) As stated in the 1974 report from the Governor’s Commission on the  
7           Administration of Justice, “Police communications as presently structured in  
8           Vermont demonstrate more than any other component of law enforcement the  
9           dearth of planning and coordination that exists throughout the system.

10           Duplication fostered by this absence of planning is proving costly in terms of  
11           efficiency as well as money.” See the Regional Dispatch Working Group  
12           Report, dated December 1, 2022, for a brief history of past efforts to improve  
13           emergency communications.

14           (6) There are currently approximately 40 dispatch centers in the State,  
15           including two State-run public safety answering points, as well as six dispatch  
16           centers located in neighboring states, that provide dispatch services for  
17           hundreds of local, largely volunteer first responders in Vermont, such as fire,  
18           emergency medical, and law enforcement agencies.

19           (7) In several areas of the State, regional dispatch centers have designed,  
20           funded, and implemented exceptional systems that practically ensure every

1 caller in their respective catchment areas receives timely and appropriate  
2 emergency response services.

3 (8) Some municipalities and State and local agencies rely on the  
4 dispatch services offered by the two regional public safety answering points  
5 operated by the Vermont State Police in Williston and Westminster, and do not  
6 pay directly for those services.

7 (9) Nearly all dispatch centers struggle with staff recruitment and  
8 retention. These staffing shortages jeopardize the reliability of public safety  
9 communications and exacerbate the stress on existing personnel who provide  
10 the critical link between caller and responder.

11 (10) The General Assembly established the Regional Dispatch Working  
12 Group in 2022 to make recommendations regarding a new regional dispatch  
13 model, including a mechanism for transitioning to and equitably financing that  
14 model.

15 (11) In retrospect, the Working Group was not given sufficient time and  
16 resources to accomplish its tasks. Despite this, the Working Group made  
17 substantial and effective progress with further framing the issues, underscoring  
18 the challenges, and compiling significant historical and current data that will  
19 underpin the State’s future efforts to build a statewide public safety  
20 communications system.

1       (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to draw upon the expertise and  
2       successes of the E-911 Board and the existing dispatch centers for the purpose  
3       of creating a reliable, resilient, high quality, secure, interoperable, cost-  
4       effective statewide public safety communications system overseen and  
5       managed at the State level, and to do so in a manner that does not disrupt or in  
6       any way jeopardize either the exceptional dispatch services currently in place  
7       or the existing E-911 system.

8       Sec. 3. 30 V.S.A. chapter 87 is amended to read:

9           CHAPTER 87: ~~ENHANCED 911; EMERGENCY~~ PUBLIC SAFETY

10                           COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

11       § 7050. PURPOSE

12       Protecting public safety and welfare is an essential function of State  
13       government and, to that end, it is the purpose of this chapter to establish a  
14       statewide, reliable, state of the art public safety communications system that is  
15       equitably and sustainably financed and universally accessible by all persons  
16       throughout the State.

17       § 7051. DEFINITIONS

18       As used in this chapter:

19           (1) “Automatic location identification” or “ALI” means the system  
20       capability to identify automatically the geographical location of the electronic  
21       device being used by the caller to summon assistance and to provide that

1 location information to an appropriate device located at any public safety  
2 answering point for the purpose of sending emergency assistance.

3 (2) “ALI “database” or “database” means a derivative, verified set of  
4 records which contain at a minimum a telephone number and location  
5 identification for each unique building or publicly used facility within a  
6 defined geographic area in Vermont.

7 (3) “Automatic number identification” or “ANI” means the system  
8 capability to identify automatically the calling telephone number and to  
9 provide a display of that number at any public safety answering point.

10 (4) “Board” means the Vermont ~~Enhanced 911~~ Public Safety  
11 Communications Board established under section 7053 of this title.

12 (5) “Caller” means a person or an automated device calling on behalf of  
13 a person.

14 (6) “Director” means the Executive Director for the statewide ~~Enhanced~~  
15 911 public safety communications system.

16 (7) ~~“Dispatch center” means a facility that provides regional emergency~~  
17 ~~dispatch services and may also be a public safety answering point.~~

18 ~~“Dispatchable location” means the location information delivered to~~  
19 ~~the public safety answering point with a 911 call.~~

20 (8) “Emergency call system” or “Enhanced 911 system” means a system  
21 consisting of devices with the capability to determine the location and identity

1 of a caller that initiates communication for the purpose of summoning  
2 assistance in the case of an emergency. In most cases, summoning assistance  
3 will occur when a caller dials the digits 9-1-1 on a telephone, mobile phone, or  
4 other IP-enabled service, or by a communication technology designed for the  
5 purpose of summoning assistance in the case of an emergency.

6 ~~(8)~~(9) “Emergency response services” means fire, police, medical, and  
7 other services of an emergency nature as identified by the Board.

8 (10) “Enterprise communications system” means any networked  
9 communication system serving two or more stations or living units within an  
10 enterprise and includes circuit-switched networks, such as multi-line telephone  
11 systems or legacy enterprise communications systems, IP-enabled service, and  
12 cloud-based technology.

13 ~~(9)~~(11) “IP-enabled service” means a service, device, or application that  
14 makes use of Internet protocol, or IP, and ~~which~~ that is capable of entering the  
15 digits 9-1-1 or otherwise contacting the emergency 911 system. IP-enabled  
16 service includes ~~voiceover~~ voice over IP and other services, devices, or  
17 applications provided through or using wire line, cable, wireless, or satellite or  
18 other facilities.

19 ~~(10)~~(12) “Municipality” means any city, town, incorporated village,  
20 unorganized town, gore, grant, or other political subdivision of the State.

1           ~~(11)~~(13) “Other methods of locating caller” means those commercially  
2 available technologies designed to provide the location information of callers  
3 when a call is initiated to access emergency 911 services regardless of the type  
4 of device that is used.

5           ~~(12)~~(14) “Public safety answering point” means a facility with the  
6 capability to receive emergency calls, operated on a 24-hour basis, assigned the  
7 responsibility of receiving 911 calls and dispatching, transferring, or relaying  
8 emergency 911 calls to other public safety agencies or private safety agencies.

9           (15) “Public safety communications system” or “system” means a  
10 system that comprises an integrated emergency call system and a public safety  
11 dispatch system.

12           (16) “Public safety dispatch system” means the system for receiving  
13 calls from the Enhanced 911 system or directly from the public and requesting  
14 emergency or non-emergency response services, as appropriate.

15           (17) “Regional dispatch center” means a facility and that provides  
16 regional public safety dispatch services and may also be a public safety  
17 answering point. A regional dispatch center shall be a:

18           (A) State dispatch center operated by the Department of Public  
19 Safety;

20           (B) dispatch center that is operational on the effective date of this act  
21 and approved by the Board; or

1           (C) union municipal district or public authority formed for the  
2           purpose of providing public safety dispatch services and approved by the  
3           Board.

4           ~~(13)~~(18) “Selective routing” means a telecommunications switching  
5           system that enables all 911 calls originating from within a defined  
6           geographical region to be answered at a predesignated public service  
7           answering point.

8           ~~(14)~~ “Dispatchable Location” means the location information delivered  
9           to the public safety answering point with a 911 call.

10          ~~(15)~~ “Enterprise Communications Systems (ECS)” means any  
11          networked communication system serving two or more stations, or living units,  
12          within an enterprise. ECS includes circuit-switched networks, such as multi-  
13          line telephone systems or legacy ECS, IP-enabled service, and cloud-based  
14          technology.

15          ~~(16)~~(19) “Station” means a telephone handset, customer ~~premise~~  
16          premises equipment (CPE), or calling device that is capable of initiating a call  
17          to 911.

18          § 7052. VERMONT ~~ENHANCED 911~~ PUBLIC SAFETY

19                   COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

20          (a) The Vermont ~~Enhanced 911~~ Public Safety Communications Board is  
21          established to develop, implement, and supervise the operation of the statewide

1 ~~Enhanced 911~~ public safety communications system. The Vermont Public  
2 Safety and Communications Board shall be the successor in interest to and the  
3 continuation of the Enhanced 911 Board with respect to the statewide  
4 Enhanced 911 system.

5 (b) The Board shall consist of ~~nine~~ 11 members as follows:

6 (1) one county law enforcement officer elected by the membership of  
7 the Vermont State Sheriffs' Association;

8 (2) one municipal law enforcement officer elected by the Vermont  
9 Association of Chiefs of Police;

10 (3) ~~one official of a municipality~~ two municipal officials appointed by  
11 the Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns from  
12 different geographical regions of the State; one of whom shall represent a  
13 municipality with low population density and one of whom shall represent a  
14 municipality with high population density;

15 (4) ~~a one firefighter appointed by the Vermont Career Fire Chiefs~~  
16 Association Governor;

17 (5) ~~an one emergency medical services provider technician or paramedic~~  
18 appointed by the Vermont State Ambulance Association Governor;

19 (6) a one Department of Public Safety representative appointed by the  
20 Commissioner of Public Safety; and three members of the public

1           (7) one public member appointed by the Senate Committee on  
2 Committees Governor who shall have expertise in finance;

3           (8) one public member appointed by the Speaker of the House Governor  
4 who shall have technical expertise in public safety communications systems;

5           (9) one professional dispatcher appointed by the Governor; and

6           (10) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Health who shall  
7 have expertise in the area of public health. Board members shall be appointed  
8 by the Governor to three year terms, except that the Governor shall stagger  
9 initial appointments so that the terms of no more than four members expire  
10 during a calendar year. In appointing Board members, the Governor shall give  
11 due consideration to the different geographical regions of the State, and the  
12 need for balance between rural and urban areas. Board members shall serve at  
13 the pleasure of the Governor.

14           (c) Members shall serve terms of three years, except that the members first  
15 appointed by the Committee on Committees and the Speaker of the House  
16 Governor shall each serve an initial term of four years; and the members first  
17 appointed by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, the Commissioner of  
18 Public Safety, and the Commissioner of Health shall each serve an initial term  
19 of two years. A vacancy shall be filled by the respective appointing authority  
20 for the balance of the unexpired term. A member may be reappointed. A  
21 member may be removed for cause only. Any member of the Enhanced 911

1 Board on July 30, 2024 shall serve on the Public Safety Communications  
2 Board for the balance of the member’s unexpired term as of that date, and may  
3 be reappointed. In appointing members to the Board, the Governor shall give  
4 due consideration to the different geographical regions of the State, and the  
5 need for balance between rural and urban areas. Members who are not State  
6 employees or not otherwise compensated in the course of their employment  
7 shall receive per diem compensation and expense reimbursement for meetings  
8 in accordance with the provisions of 32 V.S.A. § 1010. Members who receive  
9 per diem shall receive compensation for no more than 12 meetings per year.

10 (d) The Governor shall annually appoint a member to serve as Board chair  
11 and a member to serve as Board vice chair. ~~At its initial organizational~~  
12 meeting, and annually thereafter, the Board shall elect from among its  
13 members a chair and vice chair. The Board shall hold at least four regular  
14 meetings a year. Meetings of the Board may be held at any time or place  
15 within Vermont upon call of the Chair or a majority of the members, after  
16 reasonable notice to the other members and shall be held at such times and  
17 places as in the judgment of the Board will best serve the convenience of all  
18 parties in interest. The Board shall adopt rules and procedures with respect to  
19 the conduct of its meetings and other affairs. Membership on the Board does  
20 not constitute the holding of an office for any purpose, and members of the  
21 Board shall not be required to take and file oaths of office before serving on

1 the Board. A member of the Board shall not be disqualified from holding any  
2 public office or employment, and shall not forfeit any office or employment,  
3 by reason of their appointment to the Board, notwithstanding any statute,  
4 ordinance, or charter to the contrary.

5 (e) The Board shall appoint, subject to the approval of the Governor, the  
6 Executive Director who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board. ~~He or~~  
7 ~~she~~ The Director shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Board.  
8 The ~~Executive~~ Director is entitled to compensation, as established by law, and  
9 reimbursement for the expenses within the amounts available by appropriation.  
10 The ~~Executive~~ Director may, with the approval of the Board, hire employees,  
11 agents, and consultants and prescribe their duties.

12 (f) The Board may form subcommittees as it deems appropriate to  
13 accomplish the purposes of this chapter, including a subcommittee on the  
14 Enhanced 911 system and a subcommittee on the public safety dispatch  
15 system.

16 § 7053. BOARD; RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS

17 (a) The Board shall be the single governmental agency responsible for  
18 ~~statewide Enhanced 911~~ the statewide public safety communications system.  
19 To the extent feasible, the Board shall consult with the Agency of Human  
20 Services, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Public Service,  
21 and local community service providers on the development of policies, system

1 design, standards, and procedures. The Board shall develop designs, standards,  
2 and procedures and shall adopt rules on the following:

3 (1) The technical and operational standards for public safety answering  
4 points and regional dispatch centers.

5 (2) The system database standards and procedures for developing and  
6 maintaining the database. The system database shall be the property of the  
7 Board.

8 (3) Statewide, locatable means of identifying customer location, such as  
9 addressing, ~~geo-coding~~ geocoding, or other methods of locating the caller.

10 (4) Standards and procedures to ensure system and database security,  
11 resiliency, redundancy, and interoperability.

12 (5) Standards and procedures for an application and review process  
13 applicable to regional dispatch centers required to obtain Board approval under  
14 this chapter.

15 (6) Standards and procedures for reviewing and approving the five-year  
16 dispatch plans required under subsection (d) of this section.

17 (7) Standards and procedures for redefining the service territory of a  
18 regional dispatch center if deemed necessary by the Board in the interest of  
19 public safety.

20 (8) Standards and procedures for ensuring every municipality is a  
21 member of a regional dispatch center.

1 ~~(b) In addition to the powers and responsibilities identified in subsection~~  
2 ~~(a) of this section, the Board:~~

3 ~~(1) may negotiate or enter into contracts or agreements on behalf of one~~  
4 ~~or more regional dispatch centers for public safety equipment or services;~~

5 ~~(2) may purchase, lease, or otherwise obtain equipment or services for~~  
6 ~~use by one or more regional dispatch centers;~~

7 ~~(3) shall establish safety based response time standards;~~

8 ~~(3) shall develop a statewide map of wireless communications “dead~~  
9 ~~zones,” which identifies areas of the State that do not have access to public~~  
10 ~~safety radio communications service;~~

11 ~~(5) shall work with the Department of Public Service to develop a plan~~  
12 ~~to increase wireless communications coverage throughout the State; and~~

13 ~~(4) shall develop a model and process for ensuring every municipality is~~  
14 ~~a member of a regional dispatch center.~~

15 ~~(b)-(d) [Repealed.]~~

16 ~~(e)(b)~~ The Board is authorized to:

17 (1) to make or cause to be made studies of any aspect of the ~~Enhanced~~  
18 ~~911~~ public safety communications system, including service, operations,  
19 training, database development, and public awareness;

20 (2) to accept and use in the name of the State, subject to review and  
21 approval by the Joint Fiscal Committee, any and all donations or grants, both

1 real and personal, from any governmental unit or public agency or from any  
2 institution, person, firm, or corporation, consistent with the rules established by  
3 the Board and the purpose or conditions of the donation or grant; ~~and~~

4 (3) ~~to~~ exercise all powers and conduct such activities as are necessary in  
5 carrying out the Board’s responsibilities in fulfilling the purposes of this  
6 chapter;

7 (4) negotiate or enter into contracts or agreements on behalf of one or  
8 more regional dispatch centers for public safety equipment or services;

9 (5) purchase, lease, or otherwise obtain equipment or services for use by  
10 one or more regional dispatch centers; and

11 ~~(3) shall establish safety based response time standards;~~

12 (6) develop a statewide map of wireless communications “dead zones,”  
13 which identifies areas of the State that do not have access to public safety radio  
14 communications service

15 ~~(5) shall work with the Department of Public Service to develop a plan~~  
16 ~~to increase wireless communications coverage throughout the State; and~~

17 ~~(4) shall develop a model and process for ensuring every municipality is~~  
18 ~~a member of a regional dispatch center.~~

19 (f)(c) The Board shall adopt such rules as are necessary to carry out the  
20 purposes of this chapter, including, where appropriate, imposing reasonable  
21 fines or sanctions against persons that do not adhere to applicable Board rules.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

(d) A regional dispatch center shall submit for Board approval a five-year dispatch plan. The plan shall include:

(1) a projected operational budget;

(2) mapping of response times for the agencies within its service territory;

(2) mapping of wireless “dead zones” within its service territory;

(3) data regarding call volume for each response agency;

(4) a minimum training level plan;

(5) compliance with technology and equipment standards;

(6) redundancy and failover plans that ensure continuity of operations;

(7) a plan to incorporate dispatching mental health services and any other non-traditional response services, including 988 protocols;

(8) a technology lifecycle plan to ensure system upgrades are timely, sufficiently financed, and properly managed;

(9) identification of the municipalities within the regional dispatch center’s service territory;

(10) identification of the response agencies for whom the regional dispatch center provides dispatch services; and

(11) any other information requested by the Board.

1       (e) The Board shall develop a registry comprised of every response agency  
2       in the State that requires dispatch services. On or before July 1, 2025, every  
3       agency on the registry shall be a member of a regional dispatch center. An  
4       agency may receive dispatch services from an entity outside Vermont, subject  
5       to Board approval. An agency may transfer its membership to another regional  
6       dispatch center, subject to Board approval.

7       (f) A regional dispatch center shall not discontinue or curtail dispatch  
8       services without the prior approval of the Board. If a regional dispatch center  
9       seeks to dissolve, it shall submit a dissolution plan to the Board. A dissolution  
10       plan must be approved by the Board prior to the dissolution of a regional  
11       dispatch center.

12       ~~(g), (h) [Repealed.]~~

13       § 7054. ~~FUNDING~~ ENHANCED 911 FUND

14       (a) The Enhanced 911 Fund is created as a special fund subject to the  
15       provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Balances in the Fund on June  
16       30 of each year shall carry forward and shall not revert to the General Fund.

17       (b) The General Assembly shall annually review and approve an amount to  
18       be transferred by the universal service fiscal agent to the Enhanced 911 Fund  
19       and shall appropriate some or all of that amount for expenditures related to  
20       providing Enhanced 911 services.

1 (c) Into the Enhanced 911 Fund shall be deposited monies transferred from  
2 the universal service fiscal agent, any State or federal funds appropriated to the  
3 Fund by the General Assembly, any taxes specifically required by law to be  
4 deposited into the Fund, and any grants or gifts received by the State for the  
5 benefit of the Enhanced 911 system.

6 (d) Disbursements from the Enhanced 911 Fund shall be made by the State  
7 Treasurer on warrants drawn by the Director solely for the purposes specified  
8 in this chapter. The Director may issue such warrants pursuant to contracts or  
9 grants.

10 (e) Disbursements may be made for:

11 (1) nonrecurring costs, including establishing public safety answering  
12 points, purchasing network equipment and software, developing databases, and  
13 providing for initial training and public education;

14 (2) recurring costs, including network access fees and other telephone  
15 charges, software, equipment, database management and improvement, public  
16 education, ongoing training, and equipment maintenance;

17 (3) expenses of the Board and the Department of Public Service incurred  
18 under this chapter and related to the Enhanced 911 system;

19 (4) costs solely attributable to statewide public safety answering point  
20 operations; and

1 (5) costs attributable to demonstration projects designed to enhance the  
2 delivery of emergency 911 and other emergency services.

3 (f) Disbursements may not be made for:

4 (1) personnel costs for emergency dispatch answering points;

5 (2) construction, purchase, renovation, or furnishings for buildings at  
6 emergency dispatch points;

7 (3) two-way radios; and

8 (4) **emergency response** vehicles and associated equipment.

9 § 7054a. REGIONAL DISPATCH FUND; ASSESSMENT; DISTRIBUTION

10 (a) The Regional Dispatch Fund is created as a special fund subject to the  
11 provisions of 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5. Balances in the Fund on June  
12 30 of each year shall carry forward and shall not revert to the General Fund.

13 (b) Into the Fund shall be deposited any State or federal funds appropriated  
14 to the Fund by the General Assembly, any taxes or fees specifically required  
15 by law to be deposited into the Fund, and any grants or gifts received by the  
16 State for the benefit of the public safety dispatch system.

17 (c) Disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on  
18 warrants drawn by the Director solely for the purposes specified in this  
19 chapter. The Director may issue such warrants pursuant to contracts or grants.

20 (d) Disbursements may be made for:

1           (1) nonrecurring costs, including establishing regional dispatch centers,  
2           purchasing network equipment and software, developing databases, and  
3           providing for initial training and public education;

4           (2) recurring costs, including network access fees and other telephone  
5           charges, software, equipment, database management and improvement, public  
6           education, ongoing training, and equipment maintenance;

7           (3) expenses of the Board incurred under this chapter that are related to  
8           oversight and management of the public safety dispatch system;

9           (4) costs solely attributable to regional dispatch center operations; and

10           (5) costs attributable to demonstration projects designed to enhance the  
11           delivery of public safety dispatch services.

12           (e) Disbursements may not be made for:

13           (1) emergency response vehicles and associated equipment not directly  
14           used to support or enhance the public safety communications system;

15           (2) costs solely attributable to dispatch services provided to a State  
16           agency by a State regional dispatch center.

17           (f)(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2027 2028, except as provided in subsection  
18           (i) of this section, a municipality shall pay an annual dispatch assessment to the  
19           Board, which shall be deposited into the Regional Dispatch Fund. The  
20           assessment shall be calculated based on the following formula:

21            $T = B \times G + R \times C.$

1           (2) For purposes of this subsection:

2                   (A) T = total owed to the Fund.

3                   (B) B = statewide base fee.

4                   (C) G = percentage of statewide equalized grand list contained in the  
5 municipality.

6                   (D) R = remainder of the statewide dispatch budget total owed to the  
7 Fund.

8                   (E) C = statewide percentage of the three-year rolling average of call  
9 volume originating from the municipality.

10           (3) The statewide base fee shall include the Board’s administrative costs  
11 pertaining to oversight and management of the public safety dispatch system.

12 The statewide base fee shall be approved annually by the General Assembly as  
13 part of the budget process prior to the Board’s annual collection of the dispatch  
14 assessment. The Board shall define in rule what constitutes “call volume” for  
15 purposes of this subsection and subsection (g) of this section. In addition, the  
16 Board shall determine an annual assessment rate applicable to unorganized  
17 towns and gores.

18           (g)(1) Beginning in fiscal year 2027 2028, except as provided in subsection  
19 (i) of this section, the Board shall annually distribute money from the Fund to a  
20 regional dispatch center pursuant to the following formula:  $F = \Sigma (T \times K)$ .

21           (2) As used in this subsection:

1           (A) F = funds distributed to a regional dispatch center.

2           (B) T = total that a member municipality paid into the Fund.

3           (C) K = the ratio of a municipality’s call volume that was served by  
4 the municipality.

5           (3) The General Assembly shall annually review and approve an amount  
6 to be appropriated from the General Fund for dispatch services provided by a  
7 State dispatch center to a State agency, which shall reflect a three-year rolling  
8 average of call volume for which a State agency is dispatched.

9           (h) As used in this section, “municipality” means a city, town, incorporated  
10 village, unorganized town, or gore.

11           (i) A new regional dispatch center established on or after July 1, 2024, and  
12 its member municipalities, shall may be subject to the assessment and funding  
13 formulas established in subsections (f) and (g) of this section, which shall  
14 reflect a regional base fee approved by the Joint Fiscal Committee.

15           \*\*\*

16 § 7059. CONFIDENTIALITY OF SYSTEM INFORMATION

17           (a)(1) A person shall not access, use, or disclose to any other person any  
18 individually identifiable information contained in the system database created  
19 under subdivision 7053(a)(4) of this title, including any customer or user ALI  
20 or ANI information, except in accordance with rules adopted by the Board and  
21 for the purpose of:

- 1 (A) responding to emergency calls;
- 2 (B) system maintenance and quality control under the direction of the  
3 Director;
- 4 (C) investigation, by law enforcement personnel, of false or  
5 intentionally misleading reports of incidents requiring emergency services;
- 6 (D) assisting in the implementation of a statewide emergency  
7 notification system;
- 8 (E) provision of emergency dispatch services by public safety  
9 answering points in other states that are under contract with local law  
10 enforcement and emergency response organizations; or
- 11 (F) coordinating with state and local service providers for the  
12 provision of emergency dispatch services that serve individuals with a  
13 disability, elders, and other populations with special needs.
- 14 (2) No person shall use customer ALI or ANI information to create  
15 special 911 databases for any private purpose or any public purpose  
16 unauthorized by this chapter.
- 17 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,  
18 customer ALI or ANI information obtained in the course of responding to an  
19 emergency call may be included in an incident report prepared by emergency  
20 response personnel, in accordance with rules adopted by the Board.

1 (c) Information relating to customer name, address, and any other specific  
2 customer information collected, organized, acquired, or held by the Board, the  
3 entity operating a public safety answering point or regional dispatch center or  
4 administering the ~~Enhanced 911~~ public safety communications database, or  
5 emergency service provider is not public information and is exempt from  
6 ~~disclosure under 1 V.S.A. chapter 5, subchapter 3~~ public inspection and  
7 copying under the Public Records Act.

8 (d) If a municipality has adopted conventional street addressing for  
9 Enhanced 911 addressing purposes, the municipality shall ensure that an  
10 individual who so requests will not have ~~his or her~~ the individual's street  
11 address and name linked in a municipal public record, but the individual shall  
12 be required to provide a mailing address. The request required by this  
13 subsection shall be in writing and shall be filed with the municipal clerk.  
14 Requests under this subsection shall be confidential. A form shall be prepared  
15 by the Board and made generally available to the public by which the  
16 confidentiality option established by this subsection may be exercised.

17 (e) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, no person acting  
18 on behalf of the State of Vermont or any political subdivision of the State shall  
19 require an individual to disclose ~~his or her~~ the individual's Enhanced 911  
20 address, provided that the individual furnishes ~~his or her~~ an alternative mailing  
21 address.

1 § 7060. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

2 No person shall be liable in any suit for civil damages who in good faith  
3 receives, develops, collects, or processes information for the ~~Enhanced 911~~  
4 public safety communications database or develops, designs, adopts,  
5 establishes, installs, participates in, implements, maintains, or provides access  
6 to telephone, mobile, or IP-enabled service for the purpose of helping persons  
7 obtain emergency assistance in accordance with this chapter unless such action  
8 constitutes gross negligence or an intentional tort. In addition, no provider of  
9 telephone, mobile, or other IP-enabled service or a provider’s respective  
10 employees, directors, officers, assigns, affiliates, or agents shall be liable for  
11 civil damages in connection with the release of customer information to any  
12 governmental entity, including any public safety answering point or regional  
13 dispatch center, as required under this chapter.

14 § 7061. ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

15 (a) The Board may file a civil action for injunctive relief in the Civil  
16 Division of the Washington County Superior Court to enforce a provision of  
17 this chapter or a rule adopted by the Board under this chapter. The ~~court~~ Court  
18 shall award the Board its costs and reasonable attorney’s fees in the event that  
19 the Board prevails in an action under this subsection.

1 (b) A person who violates the provisions of section 7059 of this title shall  
2 be imprisoned not more than one year or fined not more than \$10,000.00, or  
3 both.

4 (c) An aggrieved individual may maintain an action in the Civil Division of  
5 Superior Court for damages, injunctive relief, costs, and attorney’s fees against  
6 any person who intentionally or with gross negligence violates any provision  
7 of, or rules adopted under, section 7059 or subsection 7055(b) of this title.

8 § 7062. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

9 (a) The Board, in consultation with the Secretary of Administration, shall  
10 develop procedures and best practices for agency cooperation and coordination  
11 on matters of overlapping jurisdiction. The primary purpose of this section is  
12 to ensure the Board has access to information related to its oversight and  
13 management authority under this chapter, including any relevant information  
14 maintained by the Department of Public Service, the Department of Public  
15 Safety, and the Agency of Digital Services.

16 (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to waive any privilege or  
17 protection otherwise afforded information by law due solely to the fact that the  
18 information is shared with the Board pursuant to this section.

19 (c) The Secretary of Administration, in consultation with the Board and any  
20 other affected State agency, may develop a plan for transferring State-owned  
21 infrastructure and equipment to the Board to support and enhance the statewide

1 public safety communications system, or for establishing protocols for the  
2 shared use of such infrastructure or equipment, or both, as deemed appropriate  
3 by the Secretary in the interest of promoting public safety consistent with the  
4 purposes of this chapter.

5 Sec. 4. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS MODERNIZATION

6 PROCESS

7 (a) Oversight. The E-911 Board shall initiate and oversee the transition to  
8 the statewide public safety communications system contemplated by this act  
9 until such time as the Vermont Public Safety Communications Board becomes  
10 operational, at which point the newly established Board shall complete the  
11 transition process. The Executive Director may retain or employ technical  
12 experts and other officers, agents, employees, and contractors as are necessary  
13 to give effect to the act's purposes.

14 (b) Fund. There is created a special fund in the State Treasury to be known  
15 as the Public Safety Communications Transition Fund, which shall be  
16 administered by the E-911 Board. The Board may authorize disbursements  
17 from the Fund to carry out the purposes of this section. The Fund shall be  
18 composed of any monies transferred or appropriated to the Fund by the  
19 General Assembly or received from any other source, public or private, subject  
20 to the provisions of 32 V.S.A. 5. Unexpended balances and any earnings shall  
21 remain in the Fund for use in accord with the purposes of this section until July

1 1, 2026, at which time the Fund shall cease to exist and any remaining balance  
2 shall be transferred to the Regional Dispatch Fund established in 30 V.S.A.  
3 § 7054a.

4 (c) *Advisory committee.*

5 (1) A Public Safety Communications Advisory Committee is established  
6 to make recommendations to and advise the Board on the transition process  
7 established in this section. The Committee shall comprise technology experts  
8 and public safety stakeholders to focus on critical aspects of a statewide public  
9 safety communications system. Members shall include:

10 (A) the Commissioner of Public Safety or designee;

11 (B) a representative from the Department of Public Safety appointed  
12 by the Commissioner of Public Safety;

13 (C) the Secretary of Digital Services or designee;

14 (D) the Commissioner of Public Service or designee;

15 (E) the Director of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Injury  
16 Prevention, Department of Health;

17 (F) the Chair of the Regional Dispatch Working Group established by  
18 the General Assembly in Act 185 of 2022;

19 (G) one member appointed by the Board who shall have expertise  
20 relevant to the purposes of this section;

1           (H) one member appointed by Vermont Care Partners with expertise  
2           in emergency mental health services;

3           (I) two firefighters, one appointed by the Vermont Career Fire Chiefs  
4           Association and one appointed by the Vermont Fire Chiefs Association;

5           (J) one municipal law enforcement officer appointed by the Vermont  
6           Association of Chiefs of Police;

7           (K) one emergency medical technician or paramedic appointed by the  
8           Vermont State Ambulance Association;

9           (L) one professional dispatcher appointed by the Board; and

10          (M) two municipal officers appointed by the Executive Director of  
11          the Vermont League of Cities and Towns who shall represent different  
12          geographic regions of the State.

13          (2) Except for those members otherwise regularly employed by the  
14          State, the compensation of the Committee’s members is that provided in 32  
15          V.S.A. § 1010(a). All members, including members otherwise regularly  
16          employed by the State, shall receive their actual and necessary expenses when  
17          away from home or office upon their official duties under this section.

18          (3) The Board shall appoint a chair and vice chair. Meetings shall be  
19          held at the call of the Chair or at the request of two members. A majority of  
20          sitting members shall constitute a quorum, and action taken by the Committee

1 under this section may be authorized by a majority of the members present and  
2 voting.

3 (4) The Advisory Committee shall cease to exist on July 1, 2027 2029.

4 (d) Transition process. The transition to a statewide public safety  
5 communications system shall occur in essentially three phases as specified in  
6 this subsection; however, certain aspects of each phase may occur  
7 simultaneously as deemed appropriate by the Board.

8 (1) Data collection. The Board shall perform an analysis of existing  
9 dispatch services in the State, including how they are financed, and the  
10 technology used to support them. Accordingly, the Board shall:

11 (A) conduct an inventory of all existing dispatch infrastructure and  
12 equipment, including facilities, hardware, software, applications, and land  
13 mobile radio systems, referring to and incorporating any existing relevant data  
14 collected by a State or municipal entity;

15 (B) determine the number of full-time and part-time personnel  
16 currently performing dispatch services, taking into account personnel who  
17 have other responsibilities in addition to providing dispatch services;

18 (C) identify the person at each dispatch center who is responsible for  
19 coordinating and overseeing dispatch services;

20 (D) determine the current total spending on dispatch services, taking  
21 into account all State and municipal appropriations and fees;

1           (E) map the wireless communications “dead zones” in the State,  
2           taking into consideration all cell towers that are part of the FirstNet statewide  
3           public safety radio access network; cellular mapping efforts conducted by the  
4           Department of Public Service; the results of any propagation studies  
5           undertaken by the Board; and any existing, relevant mapping data collected by  
6           a regional dispatch center or other entity; and

7           (F) conduct a community needs assessment with the assistance of the  
8           Vermont League of Cities and Towns to determine where and to what extent  
9           there are gaps in dispatch services or significant challenges to the delivery of  
10          dispatch services.

11          (2) Design. The Board shall design an equitably financed, regional  
12          dispatch system that is part of a broader statewide public safety  
13          communications system. Accordingly, the Board shall:

14           (A) establish technical and operational standards and protocols that  
15           ensure an interoperable and resilient statewide public safety communications  
16           system that incorporates computer-aided dispatch systems and land mobile  
17           radios;

18           (B) develop technology lifecycle standards to ensure system and  
19           database upgrades are timely, sufficiently financed, and properly managed;

20           (C) establish system and database security and cybersecurity  
21           standards;

1           (D) develop continuity of operations standards and best practices that  
2           encompasses failover procedures and other system redundancies to ensure the  
3           continuous performance of mission critical operations, and that requires testing  
4           of a regional dispatch center’s continuity of operations plan at regular  
5           intervals;

6           (E) establish initial training and continuing education standards for  
7           emergency communications personnel, including recommended minimum  
8           staffing levels at dispatch centers and other measures designed to support the  
9           retention and wellbeing of dispatch personnel;

10           (F) develop a resource allocation plan that ensures dispatch services  
11           are available in all regions of the State, including the establishment of new  
12           dispatch centers or expanded capacity and capability of existing dispatch  
13           centers, if deemed appropriate by the Board;

14           (G) establish a process for annually reviewing the budgets of dispatch  
15           centers; and

16           (H) seek to establish on or before July 1, 2024 at least one new  
17           regional dispatch center that meets the design standards and protocols  
18           developed under this subsection and that provides service in areas of the State  
19           that presently face significant challenges with respect to reliably providing  
20           dispatch services. The Board may provide grants for the establishment of new  
21           regional dispatch centers or for expanded capacity at existing regional dispatch

1 centers consistent with the purposes of this act. Any such grant shall be  
2 matched with municipal funds in an amount deemed appropriate by the Board.

3 (3) *Implementation.* The Board shall seek to have a fully operational,  
4 integrated public safety communications system on or before July 1, 2026. As  
5 part of the implementation phase, the Board shall test, inspect, and adjust the  
6 system to ensure it performs as required. Once the system is fully operational,  
7 the Board shall continue to monitor and evaluate systemwide performance and  
8 make improvements where needed.

9 (e) *Interagency cooperation.* It is essential that all departments in State  
10 government with expertise in public safety and emergency management  
11 services; information technology; and communications networks provide  
12 timely and comprehensive data and assistance requested by the Board in  
13 furtherance of its objectives under this section.

14 (f) *Report.* On or before January 15, 2024, and annually thereafter for three  
15 consecutive years, the Board shall submit a status report to the General  
16 Assembly and the Governor. The report shall include a summary of the  
17 Board’s progress with the transition process described in this section and may  
18 include policy recommendations for improving and strengthening that process  
19 or, more broadly, with regard to the oversight and management of the public  
20 safety communications system established by this act. The initial report of the  
21 Board shall include:

1           (1) a recommendation for collecting money from a municipality or  
2 response agency that receives dispatch services from a State public safety  
3 answering point free of charge and for distributing such funds to the State  
4 public safety answering point, beginning on July 1, 2024;

5           (2) a recommendation for transferring existing positions within the  
6 Department of Public Safety to the Board, if deemed appropriate by the Board;

7           (3) a recommendation for waiving, in whole or in part, the dispatch  
8 assessment for a municipality that provides dispatch services only for local  
9 agencies within its municipal boundaries;

10           (4) a recommendation on how the requirements of this act should apply  
11 to municipalities and emergency response agencies that are served by dispatch  
12 centers and emergency response agencies outside Vermont; and

13           (5) any other recommendations related to Sec. 3 of this act that will  
14 better serve the act’s purposes.

15           (g) Any new training or continuing education or other requirements  
16 established by the Board that affect the terms or conditions of State  
17 employment shall be the subject of impact bargaining between the State and  
18 the collective bargaining representative for the employee’s bargaining unit to  
19 the extent required by any collective bargaining agreements between the  
20 parties.

21           Sec. 5. APPROPRIATION TRANSFER

1        Any unobligated funds remaining of the \$11,000,000.00 of one-time  
2        General Funds appropriated by the General Assembly to the Department of  
3        Public Safety for regional dispatch funding pursuant to 2022 Acts and  
4        Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100, subsection (b), shall be transferred to the  
5        Public Safety Communications Transition Fund established in Sec. 4 of this act  
6        and used for the purposes of that Fund. As used in this section, “unobligated  
7        funds” includes any amounts for specific dispatch projects, technical expertise,  
8        and project management previously approved by the Joint Fiscal Committee.

9        Sec. 6. GRANT ADMINISTRATION REDESIGNATION

10       (a) Unless prohibited under federal law, the E-911 Board shall be  
11       redesignated as the responsible entity for administering the \$9,000,000.00 in  
12       Congressionally Directed Spending appropriated under the federal  
13       Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Public Law No. 117-328, to support  
14       Vermont’s transition to a modernized, regional communications network.

15       (b) If federal law prohibits the redesignation specified in subsection (a) of  
16       this section, then the Commissioner of Public Safety shall consult with the  
17       Board on all grant disbursements.

18       Sec. 7. POSITIONS; APPROPRIATION

19       (a) Eight permanent classified positions are created to assist with the  
20       transition to and continued management and oversight of the statewide public  
21       safety communications system established by this act.

1       (b) The E-911 Board is authorized to review and adjust the compensation  
2       of the Executive Director to adequately reflect the additional responsibilities  
3       established by this act.

4       (c) There is appropriated to the E-911 Board from the General Fund in  
5       fiscal year 2024 the sum of \$1,000,000.00.

6       Sec. 8. CONFORMING STATUTORY REVISIONS

7       When preparing the Vermont Statutes Annotated for publication, the Office  
8       of Legislative Council shall make the following revisions throughout the  
9       statutes as needed for consistency with Sec. 3 of this act (establishing the  
10       Vermont Public Safety Communications Board), provided the revisions have  
11       no other effect on the meaning of the affected statutes:

12           (1) replace “Enhanced 911 Board” or “E-911 Board” with “Public  
13       Safety Communications Board;”

14           (2) replace “Vermont Enhanced 911 Board” or “Vermont E-911 Board”  
15       with “Vermont Public Safety Communications Board;”

16           (3) revisions that are substantially similar to those described in  
17       subdivisions (1) and (2) of this section.

18       Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATES

19       This act shall take effect on passage, except that Sec. 3 (establishing the  
20       Vermont Public Safety Communications Board) and Sec. 8 (authority to make  
21       conforming statutory revisions) shall take effect on July 1, 2024.